

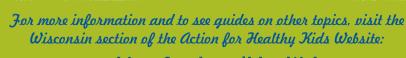
## **Guide to Physical Activity in Schools**

If a physically active lifestyle is adopted early in life, the chances are better that it may continue into adulthood. Schools can provide environments with opportunities for learning and practicing active lifestyle behaviors. According to the new 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, children and adolescents should engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week.

With increasing evidence that physical activity supports learning and in a time when physical education requirements are declining, school programs can promote physically active lifestyles for children and adolescents by incorporating activity in the school environment in the following ways:

- Provide time during the school day for quality physical activity.
- Sponsor parent-child activity programs after school.
- **Encourage** and enable school personnel to be active role models by their participation in physical activity.
- Allow access to facilities before and after school hours and during vacation periods.
- **Plan** fitness breaks: periodic 5 minute aerobic activities to break up the school day or class.
- Provide students and teachers with physical and social environments that encourage and enable physical activity.
- Encourage and enable parental involvement in physical activity.
- **Schedule** an activity break after lunch.
- **Provide** extracurricular programs, e.g. walking clubs, jumping rope, in-line skating.
- **Encourage** teachers to provide time for unstructured physical activity during recess.

- Provide quality, accessible PE classes and physical activity opportunities for children with disabilities.
- **Encourage** safe walking and biking to and from school.
- Provide a listing of community physical activity resources to students and parents.
- **Display** posters and banners with physical activity themes.
- Ask the librarian to prepare a book display and list of books about various physical activities and sports.
- Send home activity homework that parents and children can do together.
- Encourage walk-to-school programs.
- Coordinate physical activities with community agencies, allowing use of school facilities to facilitate training programs for volunteer youth coaches.
- Incorporate physical activity in other subjects such as math, science, language arts, spelling and geography.



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